The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

AUGUST, 1950

Stars at Our Fingertips
By C. WILLARD FETTER

A New Boldness
By IRVIN E. LUNGER

The Torch of Freedom
By GARLAND A. HENDRICKS

Coincidence and Providence
By JOSEPH W. REEVES

Prudes and Prodigals
By JAMES C. TRIMBLE

Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Gospel
By ALFRED MORRIS PERRY

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Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*
Garland Evans Hopkins, *Managing Editor*

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Pulpit Calendar

Aug. 6—Tenth Sunday after Pentecost; Transfiguration; World Peace Day (Anniversary of Hiroshima).
Aug. 13—Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 20—Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 27.—Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Festival of Christ the King.
Sept. 3—Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Labor Sunday.
Sept. 4—Labor Day.
Sept. 5—Labor Day (Canada).
Sept. 10—Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 12-13—Rosh Hashonah (Jewish).
Sept. 17—Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Constitution Day.
Sept. 21—Yom Kippur (Jewish).
Sept. 24—Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 24-Oct. 1—Religious Education Week.
Sept. 26—New Zealand Day.
Oct. 1—Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost; Worldwide Communion Sunday.
Oct. 8—Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost.
Oct. 9—Thanksgiving Day (Canada).
Oct. 12—Columbus Day.
Oct. 15—Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.
Oct. 22—Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost; World Order Sunday.
Oct. 29—Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost; Reformation Sunday; World Temperance Day.
Oct. 31—Reformation Day.
SEASONS: Whitsuntide (through August 26) and Kingdomtide (beginning August 27).
ALTAR COLORS: Transfiguration, white; all other days, green.

For the Record—

One of the problems we are currently facing grows out of the recent curtailment of mail deliveries. We had just set up a new schedule at the printers which was designed to get your Pulpit to you on the Monday before the first Sunday in the month. Some Pulpits are still arriving that early. We know because comments about Morton S. Enslin's article in last month's issue began arriving before the first Sunday of the month. But we have learned from many of you that your Pulpits came late. Here is another place you can help us. Please drop us a post card if this issue arrives later than the first day of the month.

Last month we told you to watch for C. Willard Fetter's "Stars at Our Fingertips." Turn to page 148 and begin reading. You will understand why we alerted you for this message. And that only begins what is in store for you. Remember Harold Lunger's sermon last month? Well, this month we have his brother Irvin preaching on another timely subject. These two openers will whet your appetite for what follows.

Each week we receive letters asking how we get our sermons. The answer to that question is definitely for the record. We get them in three ways: (1) we sometimes write and ask an old Pulpit friend, or a new luminary on the church scene, to prepare a sermon for us; (2) Pulpit readers hear a good sermon and suggest that the preacher send it to us; and (3) about three hundred preachers take time out to mail us one or more sermons each month.

The Pulpit is a service publication of the Christian Century Foundation. One of the services rendered is the chance to be heard for any preacher in the world who has a message. But, please, when you send your sermons be sure that you have them typed on one side only and that there are not more than 3,000 words.

Your response to the new features in The Pulpit encourages us. Your contributions to Pulpit Paragraphs prove that you are reading them. We are glad you like Pulpit Calendar, too. Credit to whom credit is due, so we will confess that the strengthening of our illustrations department into the new streamlined Pulpit Paragraphs resulted from all sorts of verbal and missive pressure exerted by Jim Turner, pastor of Westhampton Methodist, Richmond, Virginia. We won't promise to make all the startling changes you may conjure up, but you do help us when, like Jim, you pass your ideas along. Pulpit has another announcement for the record next month that you will not want to miss.

G.E.H.

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THE PULPIT

CHICAGO
AUGUST, 1950

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

THE GENERAL COUNCIL of Congregational Christian Churches met in Cleveland, Ohio, under the constraint of a court decree which (1) forbade the merger of that denomination with the E. and R. Church, and (2) placed the stamp of the civil law upon an interpretation of Congregational polity which had astonished the whole of Congregationalism.

Congregationalists Meet Under Tension

An appeal having been filed, the gathering was restrained from taking any action or openly discussing the situation created by the court's ruling. In such a state of tension, rumors were afloat that the opponents of merger, flushed with victory over winning their lawsuit, were determined to sweep out the entire officiary of the council and elect a slate of their own. It soon appeared, however, that instead of weakening the promerger sentiment, the court's decree had substantially strengthened it. Certain test votes early revealed that the opposition could muster only about one-seventh of the delegates, and the council settled down in a calm frame of mind to the usual program of hearing reports and planning future work. The reports showed the most successful biennium in the normal functioning of the churches, with an unprecedented total of $11,180,000 contributed for home and foreign missions, and a substantial growth in membership, Sunday school enrollment, church building, etc. It was announced that the leaders of the E. and R. Church had given assurance that they would stand by their previous commitment despite the fact that the Congregationalists are "temporarily in trouble."

The Book of the Month

A MIGHTY FORTRESS, *by Ernest Fremont Tittle. Introduction by Paul Hutchinson. Harper, $2.50.*

A YEAR has now gone by since the passing of this great preacher who spent 30 years of an exacting and exciting ministry in one of the most conspicuous pulpits in America—the First Methodist of Evanston, Illinois, seat of Northwestern University. His intimate friend, the editor of The Christian Century, has selected for this volume 20 sermons preached in Dr. Tittle's later years, and has written a 35-page introduction giving us a verbal portrait of the preacher himself. What a career it was! The great sanctuary was crowded every Sunday with students, professors, business folk and workers who spend their weekdays in Chicago's office buildings and industrial plants. Dr. Tittle sailed on no smooth sea. His prophetic witness for the faith that was in him provoked public opposition which, for a time, threatened his tenure and caused some defection from his membership. But the official board stood by him in a ringing statement, signed individually by thirty-seven of them, declaring for a free pulpit and a free church. Said a businessman who in the earlier period had taken alarm at the preaching: "I remarked the other day, 'How Dr. Tittle has changed.' Then I caught myself and said, 'No, *I* have changed.'" Dr. Tittle never receded from his emphasis on the social application of the gospel, but in his later years his social message was marked by increasing theological depth and undergirding. Dr. Hutchinson's analysis of the message and the preaching art of his great friend is as illuminating and instructive as any full-sized volume on homiletics.

A Thought for the Month

I AM ALL OUT for a new party in the church—a party to end all parties! I would call it the "ecumenical" party. It would transcend the factionalism that bedevils Protestantism. It would transcend and embrace the "liberal," the "conservative," the "fundamentalist," the "neo-orthodox" and every other party of evangelical Christians that narrows its fellowship to those who pronounce its shibboleths. An ecumenical Christian would be one whose fellowship includes other evangelical Christians of all schools of thought and who is able to work with them *in the same church* for the advancement of the cause of Christ. An ecumenical minister would be one whose understanding of Christ is so profound that he could preach the gospel to people who hold views differing from his own without breaking up the church. No man with a party spirit can do this. He is likely to be more eager to win people to his party than to Christ. The ecumenical party would not put an end to our differences. That would mean stagnation! But it would put an end to the sinful breaking up of the Christian fellowship into sectarian and factional huddles. In my early youth I was a conservative. Then, though still young, I wore the liberal badge. But somewhere along the way I shed both these party labels, and now I think of myself as a liberal, conservative, neo-orthodox, fundamentalist Christian! "My word," you say, "what a jumble of notions this man's mind must be!" I assure you it is nothing of the sort. I still have convictions! And I like nothing better than a chance to defend them! But I cringe inwardly when anyone pins a party label on me. And I am in good company. The Apostle Paul belonged to the ecumenical party. When he learned of the budding sectarianism in the Corinthian church he condemned it in the name of the ecumenical faith. "All are yours," he said, "and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God."

A Party to End All Parties!

Charles Clayton Morrison

Stars at Our Fingertips

By C. WILLARD FETTER

"Lift up your eyes on high and behold. Who has created these things?" Isaiah 40:26

MOST CURRENT motion pictures are very shallow. They glorify feeble plots, are of doubtful entertainment value, and have very little wholesome influence. There have been, however, a few truly great films. In my memory linger scenes from Ben Hur, the Ten Commandments and How Green Was My Valley. I shall never forget one of the early scenes in Madam Curie. Then a young student in the University, she sat in a classroom and heard a professor say, "Some of you may have stars at your fingertips." She was a maiden of brilliant mind who became devoted to the truth. As a scientist she developed skill in searching for truth. A great love developed between Marie and Dr. Pierre Curie and with equally great passion they searched together for a new element. The way was long and rugged; they were laughed at and almost starved. Almost ready to admit failure they walked into their laboratory one night to see their evaporation dishes aglow in the darkness. It was radium. Their search was rewarded; they had stars at their fingertips. I suppose that was the high spot of the film, but there was more to it. You will recall that a great tragedy befell Marie Curie: her husband was killed. Yet she walked through the valley of the shadow with confidence, sustained by two things: the memory of the great and devoted love which they had shared, and which death could not sever, and her devotion to still more truth that awaited discovery. She stood finally in the Academy of Science in Paris and delivered a thrilling speech, including these words:

> "No one of us can do much; each of us can perhaps catch some gleam of knowledge which added together shall bring nearer man's dream of truth. It is by these small candles in our darkness that we see the outlines of the dream, and that great plan which shapes the universe. I think science has great beauty, and its spiritual strength will sometime cleanse this world of its evils, its ignorance, its poverty, its diseases, its wars and heartaches. Every age has its own dreams—leave then the dreams of yesterday. Take the torch of knowledge and build the palace of the future."

"Stars at your fingertips!" What an inspiration that was to the young Polish woman who gave us radium and thus opened up a whole new conception of matter, showing us that the atom was not the smallest particle and that it could be split. From that discovery have come blessings and the possibility of greater blessings for mankind. From it, as well, has come the atomic bomb.

I

From the time man emerged with a spiritual sense of awe and wonder, the stars have fascinated him. Isaiah was not the first person to say, "Lift up your eyes on high and behold. Who created these things?" Very probably the first emotion akin to worship was that of a primitive man and woman standing hand-in-hand at the doorway of their cave, their faces lifted heavenward, their eyes fixed on the stars. Perhaps the first gesture of worship was a pair of arms uplifted, hands wide open, fingers stretching upward, in an effort to get the stars in the fingertips of that early searcher for truth.

So the stars have been our great inspiration. But of late those words of the Sorbonne professor that beckoned young Marie onward in the hard path of science, have come within inches of literal fulfillment. We have, at our fingertips, the ability to create small stars of our own.

In an article in the New York Times a few weeks ago (January 22) the science editor explained in terms easily understood just what the hydrogen bomb is all about. It goes back to 1929 when two scientists, one a German, the other a Briton, discovered that the sun and stars glow because hydrogen is being constantly changed into helium, releasing terrific heat. That discovery caused a minor case of jitters because the question naturally arose, "What will happen when all the hydrogen in the sun has been changed to helium?" It looked for a while like a long, cold winter. But two other scientists soon assured us that there was enough hydrogen there to last a long, long time, that the sun would not burn itself out for billions of years. We slept better after that, until two other scientists showed that if sufficient heat could be generated, the most common element in the universe, the thing there is the most of—hydrogen—could be built up into helium with a release of energy and heat (that is, an explosion) which would make the first atom bombs look and sound like pop-guns. Moreover, the present atomic bomb can produce enough heat to accomplish this, and can be

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used as a "trigger" to set off the hydrogen bomb. Such a bomb could devastate an area of 100 square miles in a single blast.

It is such a bomb that Mr. Truman has decided to build!

The science editor of the Times concludes his coldly analytical discussion of the H bomb with these words:

> "Man used to wonder why the stars shine. Now he knows. He even knows how to create a little star on earth, a star that is more baleful than any the ancients feared. It is no credit to the society in which he lives that he has to call this evanescent, miniature star a bomb and to deplore his perverted ingenuity."

Those words which were only a figure of speech to inspire a young science student have become an awful reality. Man need no longer stand with arms and hands upstretched reaching for the stars. He has them, at his fingertips. The ancient prophet felt religious when he cried, "Lift up your eyes and behold! Who has created these things?" Modern man smiles cynically, and replies, "At last, I am a god and can set blazing my own sun and stars."

But does this make man a god, or a devil?

II

Will the stars we have learned to create be stars of peace, or will they be blazing infernos of destruction? Will this latest achievement of science fulfill the words of Madam Curie and "cleanse the world of its evils, its diseases, its wars"? This is a sobering question. The obvious answer is not pleasant to contemplate.

Those who know most about it tell us that the H bomb will be 1000 times as destructive as the first atom bomb, that a single bomb will devastate 100 square miles; that 50 million people could be incinerated in the space—not of an evening—but of a few minutes. Einstein pointed out on a TV program last week that if the H Bomb is successful there will follow radio-active poisoning of the atmosphere, hence the possible destruction of all life on earth.

No wonder some people are calling the H bomb the Hell bomb!

It is all so strangely reminiscent of the words used in the New Testament to describe the way the early Christians imagined the world would come to its end. You remember those words of Peter,

> "The Day of the Lord will come as a thief; on it the heavens will pass away with a roar, the heavenly bodies will burn up and be destroyed, and the earth and all its works will melt away."

I do not think the New Testament writer knew in advance about A bombs and H bombs. I am not suggesting that modern science is the fulfillment of this passage. I am merely saying that the early preachers of the Faith did not shrink from preaching about extremely unpleasant prospects, as they appeared to them, and that the modern pulpit dare not ignore unpleasant prospects today.

There is even greater reason why sermons like this must be preached. Peter felt that nothing could be done to avert the destruction, that the only thing was for individual Christians to lead pious lives in order that they might have individual salvation when the end came. Certainly we ought to be sobered and induced to personal morality by the prospects of hydrogen warfare. But our Christian responsibility is not only saving our own souls. We ought to do what we can to change the course we seem to be taking toward destruction.

Stars at our fingertips! It's frightening!

III

In the mid-eighteenth century a Prussian philosopher named Immanuel Kant looked up toward the heavens and into his own soul, and said, "Two things fill my mind with awe: the starry heavens above and the moral law within." We are now at that point in human history where we must determine whether the moral law within us will be powerful enough to control the stars we have at our fingertips.

One wonders, indeed, whether Kant would be very awed by the moral principles of many people today. Military people claim that moral responsibility for the H bomb is not theirs. "We are not responsible for what happens," they say, "it's our job to be ready to win any war that might break out." Scientists claim no moral responsibility, "We only deal in truth. The way others decided to use the truth is not our business." Mr. Truman asserts that he and he alone made the decision to build the H bomb. That is a tremendous responsibility for one man to bear. Yet he seems to have taken it in stride, without loss of sleep, and with an air of shifting responsibility to Russia. And of course, as individuals, we are not responsible. Our general attitude is one of fear more than of moral responsibility.

The moral law within? Ah, Kant, we seem to have lost it.

But as a Christian minister I feel morally responsible to at least call to the attention of anyone who will listen that none of us can slough off responsibility for the consequence of our day by day decisions. I believe scientists and workers who build bombs have a responsibility in the matter. I think Truman bears a great responsibility. And since this is a democracy where the will of the majority is supposed to guide the decisions of the government, I feel that each citizen has a responsibility to make his will on this matter known to the President and members of congress.

What shall we do? I heard of a young man being interviewed by a theater owner, for the job of usher. He was asked, "What would you do in case of a fire?" The youth replied, "Oh, don't worry about me. I'll get out all right." Obviously that isn't a sufficiently Christian solution. You can't just say, "I'm a Christian and will be safe." You've got to remember that as a Christian you are your brother's keeper, and your brother's brother.

As Christians and Americans I think we ought to support Senator McMahon's proposals, made two weeks ago. He asserted that 5000 years of recorded history indicate the futility of an arms race. Armament races lead to wars, and races of hydrogen arms will lead to

hydrogen war. He suggested that we have but two alternatives. We can resign ourselves to a generation of "cold war" in which we will lose much of our freedom for the sake of military secrecy, and will reap the mental and physical effects of prolonged fear. To date, that is our course. On the other hand, we can do something bold to "move heaven and earth to stop the atomic arms race." He suggested a great moral crusade for peace that will go directly to the peoples of the world, winning them for a "mass jury" that will decide to stop this mad race "between the quick and the dead." He proposed cutting windows into the iron curtain of Russia so that the common people of Russia will know of our real intention. He said:

> "We assume that our actual good intentions are known to them; but they see us devote billions to guns, tanks, planes and atomic weapons. And day and night the Communist propaganda machine hammers into them the theme that armaments are intended for conquest (At the same time) they do not see that their own country is really doing the same thing."

To accomplish this, McMahon suggests that we take $10 billion a year, which is two-thirds of the amount we spend now on amassing armaments, multiply it by five years and use $50 billion over those five years in really telling the people of the world our story, by radio, by printed pamphlets and by economic aid. In return for this economic aid, given even to Russia, we would demand atomic disarmament and constant international inspection to see that no more bombs are built.

Of course it is a bold proposal. But the cancer afflicting humanity demands bold surgery. Here is our chance to set aflame a real star of hope.

Let Christian people who feel a moral responsibility for their government's actions urge this course upon our Nation!

We need to do more than stop the atomic arms race. We need to create the kind of world where peace is possible by world government. The UN is not real world government, but it is a good step toward it. What is needed is a world government with power to enact, interpret and enforce laws, just as does the government of a state or nation. The human race is more important than the sovereignty of any single nation. Can Russia be gotten into a real world federation? We do not know until we try.

I suggest that the star of world government is also at our fingertips. Let America propose to the UN the reorganization that will make it a true world government.

Thus far we go as citizens. As Christians we have even more responsibility. Frank Laubach is calling for millions of persons to pray for peace, to pray for the officials of our government, to pray for the Russians and for Stalin. This is important because, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." But we must not misinterpret here. Our prayers will not persuade God to be on the side of peace. He is already there. Our prayers will put us definitely on the side of peace, and when enough of us are there, He will be able to give us peace in our time. Moreover, what we are learning about the laws of the mind and the power of thought indicates that if enough people have a genuine spirit of goodwill and love toward the soviet people, that spirit will be transferred to them. There was real wisdom in the words Senator McMahon used when he said, "They fear our friendship more than our enmity."

The star of prayer is at our fingertips.

There is another star at our fingertips: the Star of Bethlehem. To us Christians it represents the ultimate in hope. The world is in despair. The picture is not pleasant. Nevertheless I am willing to give the world odds for survival. I base the odds on the faithfulness of God. He who created the stars and hung them in the sky sent at last the Star of Bethlehem, and with it an angels song of Peace on Earth. Jesus Christ, heralded by that Star, is the Prince of Peace. In Him God promised us His Kingdom. It may be long delayed, but at last it must come.

As Christians we must replace the world's despair with hope. We can pull the trigger and destroy ourselves, but we need not. We can find the road to peace in our time.

Each of us has a personal responsibility. The other evening Norman Cousins delivered a challenging lecture in Akron on, "Don't Resign From the Human Race." A friend and I heard it together. Separating we walked to our cars, each thinking not alone of the consequences of inaction, but of the responsibility each shares for doing something about peace. My friend passed a group of young adults who had also heard the lecture. As he walked by he heard one of them say, "Let's go. What's the hold-up? I want to get drunk as soon as I can."

Will you run away from responsibility—not by getting drunk—but by refusing to think seriously or act responsibly? Or will you do what you can that we might have peace in our time? Will you, to go back to Madame Curie's thrilling words, "Leave the dreams of yesterday, take the torch of knowledge and build the palace of the future?"

We have stars at our fingertips—the stars of atomic destruction as well as the Star of Bethlehem.

The choice between them is ours.

A Prayer for Youth

By DAVID A. MacLENNAN

Pastor, Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, Toronto, Canada

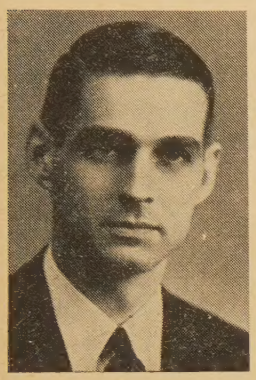
O GOD, shepherd of generations and Savior of souls, we thank thee for all who enterprised their lives in thy service, and were members of the fraternity of the concerned. In this day of destiny, move by thy Spirit upon the minds and souls of our best youth that they may become self-spending servants of the Lord Jesus. Make us all thy ministers in the name and service of Him who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. Amen.

A New Boldness

By IRVIN E. LUNGER

". . . Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness." Eph. 3:11, 12.

MODERN MAN is worshiping a new god. "Security" is its name. While men have always honored this deity, never before have they brought such lavish sacrifices to lay upon its altar, never before has their devotion been so wholehearted.



Hundreds of thousands of men and women are out on strike today. Is the prime concern wages or working conditions? No. It is old age security.

Leslie Gould, the financial editor of the *New York Journal-American,* observed recently that "when a young fellow comes in looking for a job, his first question is not what are the chances of promotion but what kind of pension will he get forty years hence."

This nation is being shaped into what is popularly known as a "welfare state." This, as the ballots of last November would indicate, is what most Americans want. They seek the assurance of security—against unemployment, against illness, against old age.

England is standing upon the brink of national bankruptcy. The terrible cost of World War II is partially to blame, but the expense of providing "cradle to grave" security is certainly involved. In our own country the Citizens Security Act, which became effective in the state of Washington this past January, calls for welfare expenditures equal to one-half of that state's total expenditure for all purposes, including education. The cost of the security men want is staggering.

'NO PLACE TO HIDE'

We are building a great radar screen around our land, at great cost. We are pouring billions into bombers designed to deliver the awesome bomb. We are about to double the size of our establishment at Oak Ridge. We are working round the clock with experiments in jet propulsion and rocket projectiles. Yet our book counters mock us with the title, *No Place to Hide.*

France is beginning to restore the ill fated Maginot Line because military men see its underground shelters as of great defensive value in the event of atomic warfare. Britain is hurriedly employing hundreds of youthful scientists for its stepped-up atomic research program.

So the story goes . . . our new god Security demands much, and we appear willing to sacrifice our wealth, and even our first-born, upon its altar.

A few voices are being raised against this idol worship. General Dwight Eisenhower, speaking as president of Columbia University a few weeks ago, urged incoming students to "grab opportunity, not security." He warned, "I am quite certain that the human being would not continue to exist if he had perfect security." Laird Bell adds his opinion that "security in its very essence is something static. It is the antithesis of progress."

Let no one minimize the importance of security. Yet let men recognize that there is something which needs to be accorded priority. In contrast to the static quality of security, this something is dynamic.

THE REAL PIONEERS

Recall the names of the men and women who have contributed most to human progress across the years. Ultimate security may have been a distant objective for them, but that which distinguished them was their venturesomeness, the boldness of their spirit. Civilization did not advance with those whose prime concern was security. Men of daring and vision, men who challenged the future, were the real pioneers of human progress.

List the names of those who first came to this New World—those who settled here and struggled against hostile forces, those who won for us our freedom, those whose industry and courage established this land in strength and greatness. Was immediate security their dominant concern? If it was, it was a security they would win for themselves, earn with their labors, achieve by their sacrifices. It was certainly no security they demanded as their natural right!

Some may say that times have changed—and they have. But has the change caused boldness to be less a virtue? When security becomes man's most urgent concern, the wheels of progress slow down and civilization begins to feed upon itself. Its twilight hour has come.

I would not minimize the matter of social responsibility, the obligation which society has for the welfare of its members. I would, however, note that there has arisen a dangerous irresponsibility on the part of many who talk most of social responsibility. Any development, regardless of the nobility of its claim, which tends to minimize the importance of individual initiative and the obligation of a man to face life with courage is both unhealthy and dangerous to society.

Our age demands a new spirit of boldness. The

IRVIN E. LUNGER succeeded Edward Scribner Ames as minister of the University Church of Disciples of Christ, Chicago. Dr. Lunger attended the Oxford Conference on Life and Work in 1937. He served as president of the Illinois convention of Disciples of Christ in 1949.

declaration that there is "no place to hide" causes many men to scurry about in frenzied search for a safe place. It should, rather, elicit the stirring cry, "Who wants a place to hide!"

Is crouching in caves or atom bomb shelters living? Is surrounding ourselves with man-made guarantees that neither hunger nor illness, neither old age nor joblessness will harm us, living? Every red corpuscle cries out in denial. We have placed Security upon the throne because we have lost the vision of life's possibilities.

What more chastening words could there be than these, found upon the worn body of an Alaskan missionary:

Let me die working—
Still tackling plans unfinished, tasks undone.
Clean to its end, swift may my race be run:
No lagging steps, no faltering, no shirking.
Let me die working.

Let me die thinking—
Let me fare forth still with an open mind,
Fresh secrets to unfold, new truths to find:
No soul undimmed, alert, no questions blinking.
Let me die thinking.

Let me die giving—
The substance of life for life's enriching:
Time, things and self to heaven converging.
No selfish thought . . . living, redeeming, loving,
Let me die giving.

This may not strike this generation as poetry of high merit. The spirit, however, thrills us. It is the spirit this age requires.

ICONOCLASTS ARE NEEDED

Iconoclasts are needed today—men who will pull down and destroy the new idol Security. Christians should be such iconoclasts. For, of all men, Christians understand what constitutes security. They know that it is not to be found in caves and man-made guarantees, but in the spirit of man.

If you want enlightening and stimulating reading, turn to the lives of the prophets of ancient Judaism—Amos, Hosea, Ezekiel, Isaiah and the rest. These men were bold, fearless. They were the saviors of their day and generation. Like the Man of Nazareth, who came after them, they challenged the religion which had become comfortable and undisturbing, the religion which had disintegrated into formal guarantees and convenient assurances. The god Security had usurped the throne of the living God. When they spoke, as when Jesus spoke, mocking the caution of the leaders of the Jews, the hearts of all who heard were quickened. Their boldness did much to restore men's faith and to renew in them a zest for venturesome living.

Who can forget such men as Peter and John, disciples of Jesus? Listen to these words from Acts: "Now when the people saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they wondered; and recognized that they had been with Jesus." Hear, too, the prayer of these disciples: "And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness."

Memorable, too, is the inscription on that little English church: "In the year 1653 when all sacred things throughout the nation were either demolished or profaned, Sir Robert Shirley, Baronet, founded this church, whose singular praise it is to have done the best things in the worst times and hoped them in the most calamitous."

Across the centuries, Christians have kept alive the spirit of boldness—aware of the fact that the only security was to be found in unfaltering devotion to truth and in unswerving faith in God and man. In our own time, typical was the Danish clergyman Kaj Munk, murdered by the nazis for his forthrightness, who declared, "Be cautious? Was Christ cautious? Were the martyrs cautious?"

The boldness of Christians stems from faith in God, from a conviction that man can enter into the high destiny which is his as a son of God, from a resolution to order the resources of life for peace and progress. The Christian believes that God cares for man and that God will sustain him in every righteous endeavor.

FAITH BRINGS DELIVERANCE

The Christian recognizes that it is fear that drives man to his knees before the idol Security. It is faith—faith in himself, faith in his fellows, faith in God's partnership, even through the valley of the shadow—that enables him to turn his back on the false god.

I am reminded of the story of the children of Israel in the wilderness. When Moses left them and went up into a high mountain to commune with Jehovah, they forgot him and the God who had led them thus far. They formed an idol of gold and fell down before it. When Moses returned, he destroyed their idol. Their faith in Jehova restored, they advanced to the Promised Land. Perhaps the voice of those who have been communing with the living God has been forgotten. Perhaps Christians have tarried too long in their churches. At any rate, a new god has been enthroned. To worship it longer is to die.

Let those who have caught the vision of man's promise and who feel the glory of divinity within their souls take the lead in destroying the idol which men—in fear—have erected in this generation. Let there be a new boldness in asserting our faith and in affirming that in it alone may security be found. The fearful must be rebuked, their idol cast down.

Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the story of old, we have been ordered to worship a golden image. Like them, let us declare, "If it be so, our God, whom we serve is able to deliver us. But if not, be it known to all, we will not worship this golden image." Whether we live or die, in these uncertain days, let it be not as cowards! Let us have faith and a spirit of boldness, as befits those whose trust is in the Lord, and live "working, thinking, giving"—unafraid, confident!

The Torch of Freedom

By GARLAND A. HENDRICKS

"If ye continue in my word, then ye shall be my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8:31, 32

A GENERATION that knew not Joseph laid aside the torch of freedom in Egypt. They turned from the adventurous faith of their forefathers, surrendered to the ways of their world, and were enslaved.

Moses set ablaze in their hearts a new passion for freedom. They joined hands in group fellowship, picked up the flickering torch, beat down the will of Pharaoh and the might of his army, and marched away to the Promised Land.

One hundred and seventy years ago our forefathers won a war for independence. They used very crude weapons for fighting. Most of that war was waged in hand-to-hand combat. The torch of freedom was flickering, and the destiny of the people on this continent was challenged. Out of every home the men and older boys marched to war, each one to do his part. Marching through bloodshed and suffering to victory, they picked up the flickering torch and held it high that it might burn brightly once again.

OUR CHANGING WAY OF LIFE

The very nature of life in olden times required men and women to develop strength of body, genius of mind, and conviction and courage of soul. There were few implementations, so life itself had to be developed. The inner qualities of personality and character were forced out into the open. Men had to understand the truth about body, mind and soul if they were to survive with any sort of freedom.

During the last century and a half the nature of our way of life has been radically changed. In our quest for truth we have turned away from life itself, and have focused our attention and energies on life's implementations.

We have looked through the telescope and have discovered the truth about our vast universe. The quest has been a vigorous one, and many have engaged in it. Now we can measure the distance of the heavenly bodies from the earth, and the relation of their movements to that of the earth. We can calculate accurately the time and place for observing an eclipse of the sun hundreds of years from now. Some of the more adventurous are even making plans for a trip to the moon.

The truth we have discovered about our vast universe has been interesting and helpful in many ways, but it has not made men free.

We have looked through the microscope and discovered the truth about invisible worlds within our physical world. We have studied germs working to destroy the human body, and have learned how to overcome some of man's deadliest diseases. The surgeon studies the constitution and the function of the human organism, and by a delicate operation performs a modern miracle of healing. Chemistry has revolutionized much of modern life. A technician analyzes the water supply of a city and determines whether it carries health or disease to an entire population.

OUR PRESENT PREDICAMENT

But the microscope and its companion test tube have not freed the human race from disease, death or moral confusion. This kind of truth has made us germ-conscious and has lengthened the average life span, and it enables us to effect combinations of material elements for the benefit or destruction of other people.

We have looked into the possibility of invention and have discovered the truth about how to build a machine civilization. As a result, commerce has covered the oceans with its mighty ships and the lands with its powerful locomotives. Industry has dotted the cities and the countryside with innumerable factories. Gasoline power has filled the land with automobiles and trucks, and is fast filling the air with giant passenger and freight ships. Water power has generated sufficient electricity to light millions of homes and turn the wheels of the mightiest industrial machines on earth. Factories on wheels till the soil and reap the harvests of many farmers. The housewife presses a button and has a mechanical slave clean her floors or beat her egg whites. The sawyer pulls a lever to cut the lumber, and the contractor puts up a house in a few hours by fitting together prefabricated sections. By radio the President of the United States speaks at once to the vast majority of the people on this continent about the present world situation. And we have just begun. Now that we can harness atomic energy we dare not even dream what the things to come may be like.

The telescope, the microscope and the whirling wheel have become symbols of our materialistic age. But they have not brought us the kind of freedom for which God made man. And we know in our hearts that E. Stanley Jones is right when he says, "Our intelligence has outrun our goodness. We have more power than we have character to handle that power." Some have even proposed that "we call a moratorium on invention until character has caught up with intelligence."

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Why are we in this predicament? We are not slaves working in the clay pits of a hard taskmaster. We are not a few ill clad colonists in the jungles of a newly settled continent fighting against blood brothers from another continent. We are the well dressed, literate, "cultured," but interdependent masses of a complicated, industrial, urban-minded world. This time we are struggling against our own evil nature, which would take the impersonal powers of modern science and use them selfishly to destroy body, mind and soul. It is a struggle in the realm of ethics. It is a fight between right and wrong.

For as we try to work out a pattern for world society we find that the finer qualities of human personality and character are in bondage. We have neglected their development while overbusy about life's implementations. Life itself has been muffled rather than expressed in its rich fullness. We have laughed at moral ideals and have cheapened the value of ideas. We have minored on the creative resources of God and majored on the work of man's hands until we have shut up our undeveloped souls in bondage. Now the human predicament demands that we pick up the torch of freedom of the human soul and carry it through to fresh victory.

Elbert Hubbard once observed that it is a terrible thing to be tied to the flywheel of an engine, but it is a wonderful thing to sit at the controls of that same engine. In one of his stories Ruskin tells about a miser who was bringing home his hard-won store of gold. A storm arose and the ship was about to sink. The miser tied all the gold he could about his body and leaped into the sea, only to be carried to the bottom by the weight of his gold. Modern man seems to be in just about such a predicament. We have tied ourselves to the flywheel of technological progress, instead of climbing to the control tower where we belong. We have tied so much of the weight of the world's material wealth about us that we are sinking deep into a sea of despair.

What is the message of our Lord for men in such a predicament? "If ye continue in my word, then ye shall be my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." If the disciples of Jesus everywhere would join hands and hearts in a great world fellowship, and pick up the flickering torch of freedom of the soul, and carry it to fresh victory for Christ, what is required of us?

A SENSE OF DESTINY

First, we must have a sense of destiny. "If ye continue in my word."

Dr. Teunis E. Gouwens suggests: "Where there is no feeling of compulsion to conform with a divine plan there may be a sense of freedom. But it is the freedom of the locomotive which leaves its tracks, the freedom of folly and irresponsibility, and its end is destruction. The man who drifts is a slave of circumstances in a world which has no regard for his soul—a sorry plight for him whom God intended to have dominion over his creation." Our age of confusion affords neither time nor place for irresponsible drifting. We need a sense of destiny which will obsess the mind of our people with world vision, and set their hearts aflame with a passionate desire to live for a high and noble cause.

A man without a country is to be pitied, but a man without a cause is of all men most pitiable. Too many of us have no cause to live for or die for. Such folk never achieve greatness, for they never release their energies and thoughts and finer qualities into the main stream of human affairs. They are bound, held in slavery. They never know the exciting adventure of flinging life into a cause without apology or reservation.

God's cause is worthy of adventure on our part. But the adventurer requires a great deal of courage. There are times when he stands against tremendous odds, and in such times he must be able to hold his ground. Our churches have in them too many people who do not have the moral backbone even of a jellyfish. They are afraid of adventure. They are too cowardly to take a stand. They have no sense of destiny.

A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Second, we need a sense of responsibility. "Ye shall be my disciples."

If we are willing to adventure for Christ he will give us responsibility. James McBride Dabbs has observed: "A free man has to plan his actions and accept the responsibility for them. He has to know his own mind and will, call upon his intelligence, make his plan, work it out, and stand by the results. These may be, immediately, either fortunate or unfortunate. But if his failure is not too disastrous, nor too often repeated, the final result is fortunate. For the man who lives like this learns the nature of life; he learns through his own experience how things usually go; he knows what to expect; he has a sense of probability."

Tragic is the life of any person who has no stickability, who spends his days taking hold and turning loose. Failure is his destiny. Sorrow stalks always at his door. Bitterness eats like cancerous tissue into his attitude. We have too many people like this, people "believing everything, believing nothing; believing nothing with their entire being, with their hearts. They have tied their hearts to nothing, to stand or fall with it; therefore they fall. They are in a sense, an evil sense, free: free as the foam on the wave, driven away by every wind that blows, dissipated into air, thin air. What we need today is more people who are fixed in their freedom; more people who have tried life for themselves and found it good."

Sam Shoemaker puts it this way: "There seem to be two ideas of freedom in the world. One is fundamentally spiritual in origin and outlook, and the early settlers of America were feeling for it when they determined to worship God in his way, and not in man's: it was a noble and unselfish idea of freedom. The other is fundamentally secular, and the French Revolution is an instance of it: this brought political freedom to millions, but that freedom has degenerated gradually into freedom to do as you please."

There is no real freedom without responsibility. We can never have a world fellowship of children of the

heavenly Father until each of us accepts the responsibility of full discipleship under our Lord Christ.

WE NEED SELF-DISCIPLINE

Third, we need self-discipline. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Winfred Rhodes observes: "The free man is not the one who can proudly boast that he has never been in bondage to any person. The free man is the one who can say that he is not in bondage to himself: to his desires, his appetites, his comforts, his prejudices, his self-importance, his fears, his tempers, his self-pityings, his habits of worry, his perversions of any other kind."

The locomotive is free only so long as it stays on the tracks for which it is made. It loses its freedom the moment it jumps the track. To do its work it must abide by the discipline for which it was created.

When examination day comes at school the boys and girls are under judgment. Some of them are free and others are not. Those who have accepted discipline and have prepared each day's lesson are free. They answer the questions as if all the sages of the ages sat by their sides whispering words of wisdom into their ears. But those who would not accept the discipline of regular study are in bondage in the hour of this judgment. Their freedom from self-discipline places them under the severer bondage of ignorance, from which they may never rise.

So it is with life. Only as we live daily under the discipline of God's truth about spiritual reality may we hope to be free under the judgments of this world and of eternity. The sooner we awaken to this truth, the sooner will we have world peace through fellowship.

What do we propose to do about our present predicament?

Soren Kierkegaard once told this story: "One time there was a wild duck used to the trackless wilderness of the air. On one of his migrations north he chanced to alight in a farmyard where the tame ducks were being fed. He ate some of the corn and liked it so much that he lingered until the next meal, and then the next week, and month, until the autumn came and his old companions flew over the farmyard and gave their cry to him that it was time to be away. The old ecstasy roused within him again and he flapped his wings in order to join them, but he could not leave the ground. He had grown fat on the farmer's corn and the indolent life of the barnyard. He resigned himself to remain there, and each season until his death the calls of his fellows roused him—but each year the calls seemed fainter and farther away. The wild duck had became a tame duck."

Whenever we cease to carry the torch of freedom vigorously we become enslaved to the selfish interests of this world and to the indolence of life about us. The world cries out in this hour for men and women who will accept a sense of destiny and responsibility, and who will discipline themselves for adventurous living in a dangerous age. Such will be the men and women who will light our way to a new order of world community life by bearing the torch of freedom of the human soul at any cost.

A Pastoral Prayer

By HERBERT BEECHER HUDNUT

Minister, Woodward Ave. Presbyterian Church, Detroit, Mich.

ALMIGHTY GOD, our gracious heavenly Father, who art from everlasting to everlasting, who dost hold the universe in Thy hand, to whom every true prayer is offered and from whom every good gift is received: accept, we pray Thee, our petitions and supplications:

That there may come a new era of understanding and concord among the nations of the world, wherein men may strengthen the bonds that unite them to one another, and develop, in quietness and confidence, those pursuits of learning, art and culture which will renew their spirits and clarify their common purposes and ideals;

That the rulers of our country and the representatives of the United Nations may be imbued with wisdom, goodness and truth, and so filled with Thy Spirit that law and order, justice and peace may everywhere prevail;

That the World Council of Churches may be enlightened with true knowledge of Thy Word, inspired with a pure zeal for Thy glory, and so dedicated to Thy holy will that truth and righteousness may flow forth, Thy Kingdom be extended and strengthened, and all ministers and congregations be established and comforted;

That the missionaries of the cross at home or abroad may give radiant witness to their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as they mingle with the poor and the rich, the illiterate and the educated, the weak and the powerful—preaching, teaching and healing; and that we, who send them forth, may ever uphold them with faithful prayer and sacrificial benevolence;

That this congregation may have the abundance of Thy grace, ministering to all sorts and conditions of men, the aged and the infirm, the wounded and the sick, the prisoners and the outcasts, the overburdened and the sorrowful, and that they may find a new consecration to the universal church, to their homes and to Christian institutions everywhere.

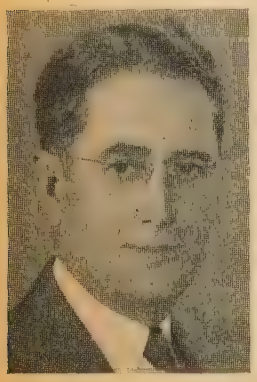
Grant these prayers which we offer in the name of the savior of the world, that the whole family of mankind may rejoice in Thy mercy and be lifted out of the present despair and spiritual depression, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Coincidence and Providence

By JOSEPH W. REEVES

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3:6.

THIS sermon began in my mind three years ago as I was traveling from central Kentucky to northern Indiana. In Cincinnati I bought a morning newspaper, and read about the internal explosions which had destroyed the proud Ohio river steamer, the Island Queen, while docked at Pittsburgh. Only twenty people had been killed. They were members of the crew of the Island Queen. No passengers were aboard.



On the editorial page of this same newspaper was a cartoon entitled "Providence." The cartoon consisted of two sections. The first was dated September 1, and pictured the Island Queen with its three decks loaded with happy holiday excursionists. The second section was dated September 9, and pictured the empty Island Queen afire and sinking from a mighty explosion. Taught the carton: it was providence that saw to it that the explosion occurred when the steamer was vacated rather than filled with passengers.

THE CARTOONIST ERRED

I have often wondered how the families of the twenty who lost their lives felt about the truth or falsity of the cartoon. I think they might write over the cartoon the same word that I would write above it—not "Providence," but "Coincidence." It was a fortunate coincidence that there were no passengers aboard when the Island Queen exploded and began to burn and sink before the crew could be rescued.

When an excursion steamer caught fire and burned at a Toronto pier last summer, with a loss of 119 lives, nobody thought of writing above the tragedy the word "Providence." You could have sanely and safely and religiously written "Coincidence."

Said a man in my first parish, who didn't amount to much for himself or God or anybody or anything, "Providence saved my life today when my car skidded on the ice." But a few days later in the same parish, a lovely, accomplished, consecrated young woman was killed by a drunken driver. The fortunate escapes or rescues which are made we attribute to providence; but how about the equally good or better people who don't escape and have to perish or take less serious punishment? Is God a capricious being who will intervene one time and be negligent or indifferent or too slow in the next instance? In the favorable as well as the unfavorable incidents, isn't it better and more sanely religious to say "coincidence" rather than "Providence"? That will relieve you of much difficult and embarrassing explaining and of numerous questions which undermine the high and strong faith we ought to have in God.

MIRACLE OR GOOD FORTUNE?

In the *Reader's Digest* for December 1949 appeared William H. McDougall, Jr.'s, dramatic account of his providential rescue in the Pacific, 200 miles off Java, after his ship had been sunk by Japanese bombs. "My Own Private Miracle" is the striking title he gives his story. I judge he had not been a man of prayer in the past, but in this emergency he prays and prays and prays, and he also swims and swims and swims. Two lifeboats pass him by; they are already overcrowded. They also pass by a friend of his in the water near him. Finally, a third lifeboat comes along. There is just enough room to take him aboard. His friend has to be left behind. He never sees him again. Was it aggressiveness or providence that saved William H. McDougall, Jr.? What would have been his fate in the cold waters of the Atlantic? Was he nearer the lifeboat than his friend as it came into view? Was his rescue coincidence or providence? Should the title of his story have been "My Own Private Miracle" or "My Own Private Good Fortune"?

In my second parish was a promising young man. He had been president of our young people's society. He was an usher in the church and a leader of Boy Scouts. When we sent him to a Pilgrim Fellowship conference he was chosen to be a deacon at holy communion. He had graduated from a trade school and was ready to live and serve. He told me that he didn't want to go to war. He thought Christians ought not to kill, and he was trying to be a Christian. But Uncle Sam conscripted him for military duty. While in England he was on a debating team which toured a number of cities. He was popular. He readily made friends. I was very fond of him. He was killed near the coast of France shortly after D-Day.

They brought his body back home two years ago, and I was asked to conduct a memorial service. As we were about to lower his casket into its final resting place, I looked across a few graves, and there stood a young reprobate returned from the war without so much as a scratch, who in all probability will never amount to anything for God or society. Then I said

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to myself, "This must be coincidence, not providence, or I could not commit my young and esteemed friend to the keeping of eternal love and tenderness."

PREPONDERANCE OF COINCIDENCE

This is what we do: We credit providence with the fortunate escapes and rescues and recoveries which come to ourselves and our friends and those whom we admire. And with a Christian gesture or a pious phrase about the mysterious ways of God, we pass over the experiences where the escapes and rescues and recoveries we had hoped for fail to materialize. We talk about providence in the rescue of Rickenbacker and the men with him on the rubber raft in the Pacific; we ignore the lack of protection experienced by the four chaplains on the Dorchester who went down in the icy waters of the Atlantic. We talk about the missionaries whose planes made safe landings despite storms and low ceilings; we say little about the plane in which the Stewarts were flying back to China and in which they lost their lives. Years of thought and observation and study have convinced me that most of life isn't providence in the sense we ordinarily use the word. We do religion and God great harm in saying it is. A large preponderance of what we call providence is coincidence.

One of the fascinating and thrilling books of this generation is Roy Chapman Andrews' *Under a Lucky Star*. It is the story of his travels, adventures and discoveries in seldom visited areas of the earth. His breath-taking escapes from serious injury and death, time after time, might be classed as providential by the piously inclined. Andrews claims no such special consideration, and thinks he was fortunate to get back alive, with the various parts of his body still attached and functioning.

Coincidence plays a large part in our lives. But not for a moment would I exclude the major role which providence may play. It is providence that helps us to handle aright coincidence, whether coincidence be favorable or disastrous to us and our friends. James Gordon Gilkey quotes the two-stanza poem which explains why one girl got married and another didn't:

> I mind me it was this very room . . .
> I was making bread at the table there.
> "It's a fine wife you'd make!" he said:
> Then she came by, with her curly hair.
>
> Queer how life goes! Why, I might have
> A man, and a brood of boys and girls,
> If she had only made the bread,
> And I had had the yellow curls!

It may be a coincidence of heredity whether you have the yellow curls which get the man or the straight hair which leaves you to bake alone, but providence can have much to do with how you use your life regardless of the matrimonial turn it may take.

PROVIDENCE PREVENTS DEFEAT

Surely this can be said about the relationship of coincidence and providence: If we love and serve God, the personal expression of providence, we shall be saved from a number of unfortunate coincidences. We shall not be caught cheating in an examination, as were some well known College football stars recently. If we love God, we shall strive to take good care of our bodies and minds because they are dedicated to his purposes. Therefore, for instance, we shall not be the cause of automobile accidents, as will those who have little regard for themselves or their fellows. If we love God with alert minds as well as affectionate hearts, we shall have courage, wisdom and strength in meeting a critical situation or emergency which may save our lives and others. Love for God will save us *from* some unfortunate coincidences and *in* some unfortunate coincidences.

A second thing is true about coincidence and providence: Providence will keep any adverse coincidence from defeating us. Betsey Barton, whose back was broken in an automobile accident when she was sixteen and who has been paralyzed for almost as many years, is inspiring and encouraging and serving mankind splendidly because of her faith in the high purpose of God for her life which no affliction can alter. Providence has kept tragic coincidence from defeating her. We who believe in God know that even if our lives are lost in accidents or wars or storms on the sea or in the air, in disease or malady, we still go on undefeated; that not even death can separate us from the love and solicitude of God. If we are still alive, though crippled or generally incapacitated for the remainder of our days, we can still render an admirable service to God and to our fellows here. If dead, we shall serve him in a better world forever. "For me to live is Christ," said Paul, "and to die is gain." Providence will keep any adverse experience from necessarily defeating us. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

PROVIDENCE IS GREATER

When George Matheson was less than two years old his mother discovered that his eyesight was defective. By some coincidence an inflammation had developed at the back of his eyes. Soon an eye specialist had to tell his parents that it would probably be a losing battle. A valiant fight was made for his eyes, but by the time he was eighteen, sight was gone. Subsequently, he graduated from Glasgow University, went on to study for the ministry, and at twenty-six had a church of his own. "He had to memorize everything in the service—the sermon, the prayers, the hymns, even his scripture lessons." He visited in his parish, wrote books, and became one of the famed clergymen of his generation and of the ages.

I can't believe that God "engineered" the coincidence which eventually caused Matheson's blindness. God did not intervene to save him from the germ or deterioration which started the inflammation. But through cooperation with God he had the courage and confidence and resourcefulness and persistence

which led to his triumph in life, despite the coincidence which brought about his early and total blindness. Here are familiar words from a hymn he wrote after he had been blind for more than twenty years:

O Love, that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean's depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

Providence is greater than coincidence, and, if appreciated, will keep every favorable coincidence from spoiling us and every adverse coincidence from defeating us. Thanks be to God who gives us the way and the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prudes and Prodigals

By JAMES C. TRIMBLE

Luke 15:11-32

SCYLLA and Charybdis—the very mention of them struck terror into the hearts of the brave sailors of antiquity. These men sailed their tiny boats through the raging storms of the Mediterranean and brought them home safely again. They would take their chances on the open sea, for there men had a chance to fight back against the untoward elements. But in the narrow straits between Scylla and Charybdis, even on days when the huge Mediterranean was placid as a washtub, the sailing boats were at the mercy of powers and forces too strong to combat. And the broken, twisted hulks on both sides of the straits gave eloquent testimony to the well founded fears of generation upon generation of seafaring men.

SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

Scylla and Charybdis—what were they, besides being fear-inspiring words? Scylla is a huge rock projecting out of the sea just off the toe of Italy's boot. Charybdis is a huge sucking whirlpool off shore from the island of Sicily and a few hundred yards from the rock of Scylla. Between the whirlpool and the rock was a very narrow path through which boats could sail safely. But the slightest deviation, and the ships would either smash themselves on the unyielding mass of Scylla or be whipped about and sunk in the treacherous waters of Charybdis.

Scylla and Charybdis, in time, entered the daily speech of mankind as symbols of a twofold danger. If a person veered too much to the left he would come to ruin on Scylla; if he went to the right he would meet disaster on Charybdis. We have a similar expression—"Between the devil and the deep blue sea."

In rearing a family, parents are always sailing between Scylla and Charybdis. If they are too easy on their children, the children will grow up to be shiftless and without a sense of responsibility. If they are too stern, they will break the spirit of their children. In acquiring an education, we are always sailing between Scylla and Charybdis. If we hit the books too hard, we become stuffy and academic. If we do not study, we face the possibility of remaining in the same grade another year, and the far greater danger of graduating with an empty head. The businessman is also sailing between Scylla and Charybdis. If he does not purchase merchandise in large quantities, he will not be able to meet competition. If he has too much on his shelves, he cannot sell and thus suffers an inventory loss. In almost everything we do in life there is either a Charybdis to our right or a Scylla to our left. And at best most of us are only fair navigators. We make our choices and weep at leisure.

JESUS KNEW LIFE

Jesus had a penetrating knowledge of human life. He knew what were some of the Scyllas and Charybdises upon which human lives are often wrecked. He once told a story about two boys and their father. The opposite life decisions of the two boys brought each to ruin. The decision of one lad led to Charybdis and of the other to Scylla. The younger son chose Scylla, the older chose Charybdis. The younger son chose to be a prodigal, the older to be a prude. And as we today do our best to steer our lives between the rock of prodigality and the whirlpool of prudishness, many of us meet disaster on the one or the other.

The younger lad took his share of his father's wealth and struck out for the big city. As long as he had silver in his pockets, he had friends too numerous to count. He went to the best casinos and night clubs, entertained his gay new-found companions lavishly, and then took the crowd to the theater. He stayed in the best

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JAMES C. TRIMBLE represents the ecumenical movement in action. He is pastor of the Congregational church at Malta, Montana, and serves as supply minister of the Methodist church at Saco, Montana. Last winter he filled the pulpit of the local Evangelical Lutheran church for two months. He is a graduate of the Oberlin School of Theology.

hotels and took his meals in the most exclusive cafés and always tipped the waitresses liberally. He had a good time until his money ran out, and then he discovered that his friends were snubbing him and were no longer seeking his company. His money gone, his gay friends no longer friendly, his stomach empty, he hired himself out to work for a farmer and feed hogs. Living conditions were so desperate that the young lad munched on the bean pods which the hogs ate, in order to satisfy his gnawing hunger.

It took a pigpen to bring the lad to himself. There among the grunting, rooting, squealing pigs, he came to his senses. In imagination he could see his father, the servants and the family gathered around the big dining-room table devouring well filled platters and bowls of food. He could see them retiring at night and sleeping between sweet-smelling sheets. He could begin to appreciate the values of his home. Thinking these thoughts, it did not take the young lad very long to conclude that the pigpen had no future for him. And he said to himself, "I will return home and my father will perhaps hire me as a field hand." So he turned his face homeward.

While the young lad was still a long way off, his father, sitting on the front porch in the cool of the day, saw him coming. Not waiting to see what his son would have to say, the father dashed from his chair and ran to meet the lad. Throwing his arms around the neck of the boy, he hugged him and wept for joy. The lad tried to make his excuses and tell his father that he would be quite happy to be merely a slave. But the father listened not to these words. Instead the father beckoned to a slave, ordered him to kill the fatted calf, to bring out clean clothes for the boy, put a ring on his finger, and invite in all the neighbors for a big celebration. And thus the prodigal returned home.

A LOSING VENTURE

Why is it that men and women, lads and lasses, have to find through their own sorrow that the way of the prodigal never leads to permanent happiness? Why is it that men have to butt their own heads against the rock of Scylla before they see that prodigality is a losing venture? No amount of sorrow or repentance on the part of the younger son could bring back one penny of his inheritance which he had run through in the city. There is always forgiveness, but there is no bringing back of wasted lives, no restoration to an earlier innocence, no way of removing the scars of folly. There are many men and women living good Christian lives today who would give their last dollar if they could blot out from their minds the memories of their prodigal past.

Every prodigal who goes into the far country, for what he thinks will be a good time, takes with him three notions which the whole history of mankind has proved false but in which the prodigal places implicit faith.

First, he goes thinking a good life is stuffy and confining. It might be all right for those "dear hearts and gentle people who live in my home town," for the Ladies' Aid and the Sunday school children, to read the

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Good Book and listen to preachers and hearken to the teaching of Jesus; but for the prodigal-minded, anything that smacks of righteousness and goodness is pretty dull stuff for one who is just beginning to live.

Second, the prodigal goes into the far country with the smug notion that he is different. He knows and has read about people who have got all tangled up with gambling, drink, sex and fast living. But the prodigal thinks that he is different, that he has the answers, that he knows the proper precautions, that he knows when he has had enough, that he knows the right persons. Nothing like what you read about in the newspapers will ever happen to him—so he thinks. Every prodigal who has beaten his life to pieces on Scylla, the rock of prodigality, has begun his venture into the far country with the feeling, "I'm different."

Third, every prodigal goes into the far country with an insatiable curiosity. Up to now he has only existed. Once he hits his stride in the big city and catches on to its ways, he will really begin to live. Give him a few months to catch up in, and then he will show the home folk what kind of stuff he is made of. The prodigal is like a young kitten, has the same amount of curiosity and gets into about the same amount of trouble and sorrow. Kiki, the parsonage kitten, is at last getting wise to her curosity. She is discovering that curiosity can drown the kitten. During a certain period of Kiki's development the bathtub had a peculiar fascination. The glamor of the bathtub wore off the day she tumbled into a well filled tub. How sorrowfully the prodigal learns that all that glitters and arouses curiosity can also smite, and harm, and destroy.

WHIRLPOOL OF PRUDISHNESS

But for most of us who make up a Sunday morning church crowd, the rock of prodigality is not the danger. We are more apt to be sucked into the whirlpool of prudishness. Of the two lads in Jesus' parable, most of us resemble the older son, who stayed at home and thought he was a pretty decent person. A preacher, a church member, a teacher, a good citizen—all of us in any of these classifications can easily become prudes and never know it.

The older brother was out in the field working when the prodigal returned to his father's house, and he arrived home at the height of the celebration. Hearing the music, the dancing feet and happy voices, the older brother asked a servant what was going on. And the servant answered him: "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound." These joyful words did not make the older brother happy. His face fell, anger flashed in his eyes, disgust was in his heart. He refused to attend the merry-making.

The father came out and entreated with him to come in. But he answered his father: "Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!"

To these bitter words the father replied: "Son, you are always with me and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found." Jesus concluded the parable with these generous words of the father. The older brother did not change his mind. He remained a prude to the unhappy end. He was swallowed up in the boiling waters of Charybdis.

PRUDES TO BE PITIED

Every prude who stays at home, who never gets into mischief, who lives a fairly decent life, is usually the victim of one or more of the following rather common, often repulsive, and frequently deadly complaints:

First, the prude is proud in spirit. "I have never disobeyed one of your commands." The prude lives by the letter of the commandments. From what he thinks is a lofty spiritual height, he looks down with contempt upon the rest of struggling, sometimes falling humanity. The sorrows, the temptations, the blows that send other men spinning, the prude infrequently knows. He knows that he is good. And unlike the great saints—the men and women who measure their lives by the measure of Jesus Christ and who know that they are not good and holy—the prudes glow with satisfaction and the sense of achievement as they compare their accomplishments with those of some poor prodigal. But in the catalogue of deadly sins, pride has always ranked at the top or very near it.

Second, the prude is unforgiving. That his younger brother had learned by bitter experience, that his father was pleading with him to forgive, meant nothing to the elder son. Let his brother suffer the consequences of his decisions, let him reap his wild oats, let him sleep in the bed he had made, let him stew in his own juice. These were the thoughts that streamed through the mind of the prude as his father pleaded with him to forgive the prodigal. The only truth that prudes believe is: Men reap what they sow. Prudes think they do not need mercy, so why should anyone else receive it?

Third, the prude is resentful. Feel the resentment in the words of the older son to his father: "You never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!" Poor, weak, resentful prudes, they go through life thinking the rest of mankind is sorely mistreating them because no one ever gives them favorable mention for keeping up the niceties of a sober, respectable life. And so the end of the prude is worse than the beginning. Resentment eats away the very joy of living, just as acid slowly corrodes the terminals on an automobile battery.

In one respect the prodigals have it over the prudes. The prudes hardly realize that they are being sucked down into the whirlpool of Charybdis, while the prodigals, when they end up in the pigpen or butt their heads against the rock of Scylla, know that they are undone. They are ready to repent and to seek help. They find in their own sufferings that they are not wise enough to steer their boats through the treacherous

channels of life. Like the lad in the story, they come to themselves and set out for home.

It is a curious fact of religious history that the prophets have reserved their sharpest words for the prudes. John the Baptist speaks: "Woe unto you Pharisees, scribes and hypocrites." The Old Testament prophets again and again soundly condemn the prudes: "Woe unto you who trust in ritual, sacrifice and are not clean within." Jesus also had caustic words for the good religious people of his day. The explanation of this sharp language seems to be this: the prudes always have so much confidence in their own goodness that only strong, shocking language will open their eyes to their desperate straits.

Jesus, and other great religious leaders, have usually had winsome, wooing words for the out-and-out prodigal. The prodigals do not need to be told that they have made a mess of things. They know it. They need someone who will believe in them, who will have confidence in them, even when they do not have very much confidence in themselves. Jesus once said, "The sinners, harlots, and publicans—the kind of folk of whom there is no doubt that they are prodigals—will enter the Kingdom of God before the good people." A prodigal is a damn fool and knows it. A prude is a damn fool and does not know it.

A TWO-FOLD DANGER

Scylla and Charybdis—that is a twofold danger which we all have to face. At some time in our lives most of us will play both the part of a prude and the part of a prodigal. Most of us are neither prudes nor prodigals. We are a mixture of both. Sometimes we will scrape the rock of Scylla and sometimes we will fly about in the whirlpool of Charybdis. In fact, there is no guarantee that any of us will get through.

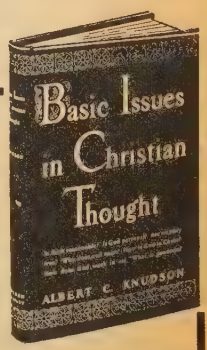
But there is more to this parable than Scylla and Charybdis, more than the possibility that we will dash our lives to pieces, more than the possibility that we will be twisted and tossed up on the surf to meet our doom. There is hope in this parable! Whether we be prude, prodigal, or a mixture of prude and prodigal, there is a Father in heaven whom Jesus revealed who stands ready to enter our lives and empower us so that we can do what we could never do by ourselves. With God's help any man can sail through the straits between Scylla and Charybdis.

God welcomes the repentant prodigal! God seeks the unrepentant prude!

"One difference between a machine and a living organism is that a machine can generate power for no purpose. Whether or not the power is harnessed and used makes no difference to the machine. Whereas a living organism requires a purpose, a need. Whether it be an amoeba or a man, there must be a seeking if there is to be a saving.—V. A. K.

Resources *for* Study . . .

BASIC ISSUES IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT



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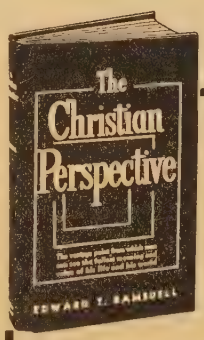

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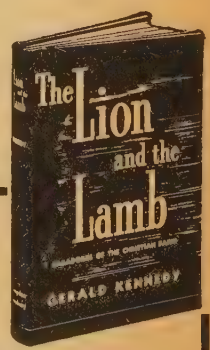

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Books Have Hands and Feet

A Sermon for Children by Alvin D. Johnson

PLAYING is fun, and it is fun because you have good imaginations. One minute you are a fireman driving a huge fire engine down the street, the siren shrieking, the bell ringing. You whiz around the last corner, rescue a few women and children, and go back to the firehouse to clean the fire truck.

You become fathers and mothers as you play house; or the pilot of your own airplane; or a cowboy as you ride over the plains on your pinto pony. There isn't any limit to what you may become and do in your imagination.

Imagination is make believe; but if you believe hard enough, whatever you do becomes very real.

Here is a story that is true even though it is make believe. Older people would find it hard to do, but not you. Attention now, all make-believers!

See the four corners of this book? At the top . . . yes, arms are growing, and hands, and fingers. And, at the bottom corners, see, legs are growing, and feet. We have a book with hands and feet. The hands take hold of us as we read, and the feet lead us along.

The name of this book is *Through the Looking Glass.* We are led on a wonderful journey. We go through a looking glass. We meet strange people and animals. The animals talk. We even go for a walk with a carpenter, a walrus and some oysters.

"O Oysters, come and walk with us,"
The Walrus did beseech.
"A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
Along the briny beach:
We cannot do with more than four,
To give a hand to each."

A second book with hands and feet is this hymnbook. It takes us along singing. We sing our faith. Listen to this:

Faith of our fathers, living still,
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword,
O how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious word!
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,
We will be true to thee till death.

We can find many hymns that help us through the day whatever we do. The hands and feet of this hymnbook take us along the *upward* and *onward* way which is the only way a Christian can go.

And, finally, a book which has the kindest and most helpful hands of any book in the world—the Bible! The hands have helped people for thousands of years. The feet of this book lead us in the best way we can go. These hands help us over the hard places; they comfort us when we are sad; they discipline us when we do wrong; but they never cease leading and guiding and loving us.

Take hold of the hands of this Book and allow them to lead you. They will take you on wonderful adventures. They will make your life full, and free, and abundant.

The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. . . .

Titles and Texts — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

Russell Van Alen, First Presbyterian, Dinuba, Calif. "Influential Living." Acts 5:15—". . . they even carried out the sick into the streets, . . . that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them."

E. Hampton Barnette, Methodist, LaGrange, Ky. "Lesser Lights." John 8:12—"I am the light of the world."

Edgar J. Bailey, First Baptist, Edmonton, Alta., Canada. "The Call of the Trumpet." II Chron. 29:27—"And the song of the Lord began with the trumpets."

Charlie W. Shedd, First Presbyterian, Ponca City, Okla. "Our Mistaken Supposings." John 20:15—"She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

J. R. Brokhoff, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Atlanta, Ga. "Will the Church Be Adequate?" Rev. 11:1—"Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein."

William I. Newmen, Bethany Congregational, Los Angeles. "Physician, Heal Thyself." Rom. 2:21—"Do you ever teach yourself, you teacher of other people?"

Francis E. Whiting, Manayunk Baptist, Philadelphia. "On Getting Ready for a Rainy Day." Eccles. 12:1 (Am. Trans.)—"Remember your Creator in the days of your vigor, before the evil days come."

(The Pulpit welcomes contributions for this column. Give minister's name, church, address, sermon title and text. Space allows us to print only those of especial timeliness or unusual significance.)

Pulpit Post

From the Pulpit, Perhaps?

A double Hurrah for Dr. Enslin's "Where Do They Get Them?" (July, 1950). To borrow his own cliche, that *was* a honey! But a man who can write so vividly and sharply himself doesn't need tear-jerkers. Alas, and another alas, for the rest of us poor dummies. Where do I get mine? Wouldn't you like to know?

First Methodist, FAY CHARLING MILLS.
Hastings, Neb.

'Not Very Edifying'

SIR: "Where Do They Get Them?" by Dr. Morton S. Enslin, in July Pulpit, is interesting but not very edifying. He seems to be rather proud of his irreverence, and is guilty of the very thing which he condemns, exaggeration, and painting the picture to suit his own whims. The article is cleverly written, but is he not "playing to the galleries" in much of it? I am just asking.

Christian Church, HOWARD W. KING.
Philadelphia, Pa.

'Very Thought-Provoking'

Sir: The Pulpit is a great inspiration to us in the parish ministry. Dr. Enslin's article on "Where Do They Get Them?" was very thought-provoking, and hit most of us at our weakest point, our illustrations.

First Baptist, W. HAYDN AMBROSE.
Lancaster, Pa.

We Blush!

SIR: I like "The Pulpit": get a lot of good ideas from it. Have just finished reading "God and the tax assessor," by Eugene M. Austin, in March's Pulpit. It's interesting, even if impractical. But I think Mr. Austin missed one or two possibilities in ways of spelling "Caesar." To be sure, he found four ways—"Ceasar," "Casear," "Ceaser," as well as "Caesar"': but I wonder why he didn't try others: "Seizer," for example, since he was writing about tax collectors.

Perhaps your proof-reader was on vacation?

Community Church, EVERETT W. LORD.
Foresides, Maine.

Holes for Binders

SIR: Just a note: As long as the binders for the Pulpit magazine are being "pushed" so—I bought two of them—wouldn't it be a return to your readers to punch holes in the magazines to fit the binders?

The Methodist Church, E. F. GROVER.
Clarissa, Minn.

(It would not be advisable to punch holes in The Pulpit for binding purposes for two reasons: First, it would be too expensive; and second, many readers prefer not to bind their copies.—THE EDITORS.)

We Asked For—and Got—It

SIR: For some months, The Pulpit has been tossing together a very mediocre hodge-podge of disgustingly brief sermonettes—pale, puffy, paralyzed, puny pygmies! This is to be decried. You must be passing up by the ton the better, full-length stuff. Come now, rid yourself of that streamlining mania! Be done with that cutting-complex! The best of the things you deal in does not come in small doses. Away with such ticktack and tomtit tintypes. Start giving us some real meat—something with length and breadth and depth to it. Anathema to your infernal digest-disease!

We shall be looking for these additions and indicated changes and improvements. And if conspicious by their absence, we'll be looking again—for another journal!

Memorial Baptist, K. F. KAUFFMAN.
Frostburg, Md.

Likes Changes

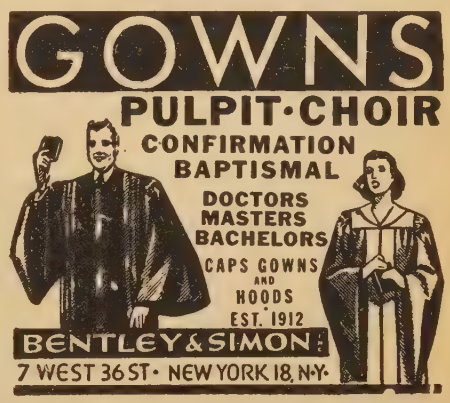
SIR: I have been much interested in noting the changes which are taking place in The Pulpit. I think they add greatly to the attractiveness of the publication. Particularly do I like the Managing Editor's "cozy corner" from which he chats with the readers.

Epworth Methodist, JOSEPH S. JOHNSTON.
Norfolk, Va.

Experiment in Preaching

SIR: I have set upon a different form of preaching. Instead of a twenty minute sermon, I am now giving two ten minute sermons, although relating the two. The order of Service has drawn a fine response from the congregation.

Pilgrim Congregational, ERWIN A. GAEDE.
Madison, Wis.



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Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Gospels

By ALFRED MORRIS PERRY

THE QUEST of the historical Jesus—to borrow a phrase associated with Albert Schweitzer's great work—has long been accompanied by cries of dismay from sincere and pious souls who felt that new light upon the Founder and Object of our faith might destroy the precious and treasured heritages of their own belief and trust. With each new conclusion of biblical study there have been those who have cried, like Martha of old, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him!" Yet always there has been an angel standing by, to remonstrate, "He is not here; he is risen!" And in the end, when they have raised themselves from their dismay, they have again beheld their Lord, standing by and still to be recognized in the new guise which has been given him.

It was not otherwise when Strauss and the liberal critics of the 19th century first presented, instead of an incarnate deity, the picture of the Carpenter of Nazareth, the teacher and seer, who is now such a familiar figure to us all.

Then, at the beginning of the present century, it was the turn of the 19th century liberal to cry out, when Schweitzer disclosed the eschatological Jesus as an apocalyptist bemused with his own messiahship but disappointed to the last. But the specter of the eschatological Jesus has been dissipated with the years, and the eschatology has found its place and due proportion with the other strands of the gospel tradition.

Today it is another viewpoint that seems destructive—the approach of form criticism; and it is to this that we turn our attention.

I.

To begin with the negative side of the picture: What is this form criticism? It is a line of study now some 30 years old, and perhaps at present the chief topic of discussion among New Testament scholars. It cannot be denied that it has profoundly affected all scientific study of the Gospels. It recognizes, with most biblical scholars, that a gap of more than a generation elapsed between the career of Jesus and the recording of his deeds in our existing Gospels, and it seeks by its own new methods to bridge this gap.

The study rests upon three basic principles: (1) that the substance of our gospel narratives was transmitted for a time orally, in the form of disconnected anecdotes and sayings; (2) that in this process those anecdotes were *selected* which served the needs of the church; (3) that this use in the churches resulted, with frequent repetition, in giving to each anecdote

a fixed *form,* the most concise and effective possible, which from then on could hardly be varied in the further retelling. To these principles the form critics add a fourth, the most distinctive and most debatable of all: (4) that the history and origin of the anecdote can be discovered from its *form.*

The first of these principles needs little comment. Eusebius (or was it Papias?) long ago noted that, however the evangelists may have striven to give a connected account of Jesus' life, they had very little to work with except scattered anecdotes or collections of anecdotes, and a somewhat more connected account of his arrest, trial and death. It is clear that our Gospels reflect, not the personal reminiscences of any aged apostle, but the traditions about Jesus which were treasured by thousands of Christian believers in the churches which bore his name. These are not *apostolic* Gospels, they are *church* Gospels.

Neither does the third principle—that the anecdotes were given a fixed *form* by frequent repetition—stand in need of much comment. The marvelous vividness and conciseness of the gospel narrative is itself testimony to the way in which each individual paragraph was polished and pruned to bring out its essential message in the most effective possible fashion.

But the second principle—that of the *selection* of the materials—requires more comment. It is clear that the Gospels were written to serve the needs of the Christian community. Their primary purpose was not to set forth a bare history, but to present cogent ground for belief in Jesus the Christ. The materials were selected from among the whole mass of possible tradition and reminiscence of Jesus simply because these did serve that purpose in some way. The Gospels, then, are propaganda first, and history only incidentally.

It follows from this—and here is the negative side of this new study—that the narratives of the Gospels are a more accurate reflection of the needs and ideas of the early churches than of Jesus himself; for the early preachers would naturally have selected what was useful to their immediate purposes—even as you and I do with our printed Scriptures—omitting, neglecting and suppressing some things, unconsciously adding others or confusing their own comments with the repetition of the authentic traditions. Thus the Gospels are shown to be a truer reflection of the mind and history of the early church than of Jesus himself. And if we make such an admission, the historical basis of our faith seems greatly shaken.

Thus modern criticism would seem to leave us little but the shell of our gospel history, if we accept its conclusions that the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is a theological creation and that even the Synoptic evangelists report concerning him only the things that the early churches chose to believe. Our quest of the historical Jesus would indeed end, as Schweitzer predicted, in a blank; the real Jesus would vanish in the mists of uncertainty, and we might indeed echo Martha's cry, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him!"

ALFRED MORRIS PERRY is professor of New Testament at Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor, Maine. Nine grandchildren and photography fill up any spare time his students leave him. He is director of the Maine Congregational Christian conference.

II.

Now that is the negative side, and it does undeniably present a serious threat to our preaching of the Gospels. If our Gospels are not history, authentic and unassailable history, how can we use them? Upon what can we base our claims for Christ? Shall we flee from free investigation to take refuge in tradition and dogma, that we may repect the conclusions of these scholars *in toto?* There are those who would take that path—and their number may be increasing; yet there is little hope in obscurantism, and that refuge may not be ours.

And there *is* a more positive side to this modern criticism. Its conclusions are not of necessity as destructive as I have presented them. What can we say in qualification and rebuttal?

In the first place, the method itself does have its limitations. Many of its judgments are more subjective than critical, and its "forms" are none too precisely defined. It is moreover true that the early evangelists and preachers were of necessity working within a historical framework. Even if we do not possess the personal reminiscences of some outstanding eyewitness and companion of Jesus, we do have traditions authenticated by public use, where there were many, both believers and skeptics, who could attest or challenge their truth and accuracy. "These things were not done in a corner."

The anecdotes, too, themselves breathe the atmosphere of the sunny hills of Galilee, not of the great Roman cities where Christianity later was propagated, giving evidence that they were formulated, for the most part, in the earliest days of the church, when the remembrance of Jesus was most fresh and vital. Thus the new criticism, even if it has cast doubt upon some portions of the gospel record, can find in the forms a guarantee of the substantial accuracy of the greater part.

There does remain, however, at least a margin of uncertainty which can be most disquieting to our assurance; and more needs to be said. It is this:

We live by faith, not by fact; by experience, not history. It is a *fact* that the earth swings about the sun with a radius of 93 million miles, more or less, according to the season. But the fact is immaterial to most of us; we live by the faith that the sun will "rise" at the appointed time tomorrow morning. It is a fact that electric impulses travel with the speed of light, 186 thousand miles each second. But we live by the faith that when we throw the switch, the wiring in our homes will bring the current to light our lamps, heat our ranges or turn our motors.

To apply the analogy: It is not the *historical* Jesus who is the object of our faith, the man who spent 30 undistinguished years in a village carpenter shop and then flashed into prominence as a teacher or prophet or miracle-worker for a brief period before he died a shameful death upon a Roman gibbet. That is just where the liberal theology of the past century made its biggest mistake.

No, Christianity began where the Gospels end, with an empty tomb and an ascension and an ongoing mission. Our *faith* is in the ever living Christ, not in the Galilean carpenter, however good and kind his life, however beautiful and wise his words. Our faith is not in history, but in the spirit which shone in the life of the Galilean teacher, shone so clearly that men felt they had in him a new vision of God—the spirit which somehow was communicated to those who were closest to him, and from them passed on to others until the movement which claimed his name became a world religion. For true religion is not a matter of fact and history, to be taught out of books; it is an enthusiasm and a vision in the spirits of men, that passes by contagion from one life to the next.

And now we may observe one gain. If our Gospels fail as records of the life of Jesus, they are the better witnesses to that spirit of the ever living Christ which dwells in the church and in the spirits of men, and to the faith which men have reposed in him and have not been ashamed. If modern criticism has shown the Gospels to be not books of history but testimonials of faith, still, we know that it is not by history that we shall be saved.

III.

One might add, perhaps, that faith is itself the greatest of all the facts of history, and the source from which many of its outstanding events have sprung. But that is another story. Let us turn, rather, to consider whether we may not merely save something precious from the "wreckage" of our Gospels, but may indeed find in the approaches of modern criticism some things of new and great worth. What is there of positive gain in the new approach?

In the first place, there stands revealed in the growing church a *dynamic and developing faith* and spirit. The Gospels, therefore, are no mere static portrait of a dead hero; they are even more the reflection of the living spirit of the undying Christ in the lives of men and women fervently and even uniquely devoted to him. And it is such living experience, far more than any static record, that can kindle like experience in others—and there lies our present need.

Another gain: seen with these eyes the Gospels reveal a faith in a living and *dynamic God*—not so much the Infinite and Omnipotent as the moving force in the contemporary life, manifesting himself in miracles, known in his sending of Jesus the Christ, preparing for himself a Kingdom among men. And if the philosophical assumptions of our modern living and our modern science are dynamic more than static, surely such a view will accord better with the modern temper than any retreat to the static dogmas of medieval faith.

A third insight of the newer approach—which is at the same time a very old insight—is that of *the dynamic Christ.* Though our Gospels may describe a historical Jesus, it is clearer than ever from the new criticism that his figure is viewed always in the light of the living Lord and Master of the church. If miracles of healing are reported, it is the power of the Christ to change lives that is exemplified. If his call of disciples is described, it is as example for later Christian followers. The Galilean carpenter may be named; but it is the living Christ who is experienced. The Gospels themselves speak far more clearly of the Savior of men, who is to be known and appropriated and proclaimed in every generation, than of the Nazarene who perished on a Roman cross.

IV.

So the wheel has come full circle. Our modern criticism does indeed cast some doubt upon the literal authenticity of this or that paragraph of the gospel record. But if it questions the letter, it authenticates the spirit. If it takes from us some dependence upon the historical Jesus, it drives us to seek the ever living Christ.

And therein, as ever in all the centuries of the church, lies our obligation, our task, our privilege—to turn with mind and heart to seek the Christ of every man, to submit our lives to him and by obedience and discipleship thus come to know him as our Teacher and Savior and Lord, and then in word and in life to reveal to needy, frustrated men and women him who shall have become the Light and Comfort of our lives.

● *The Minister's Challenge*

RUBINSTEIN, the famed pianist, played in the city one Saturday night and then went to stay at the home of a friend. The host asked him if he would not like to attend church on Sunday morning. Rubinstein replied, "Why yes. I would love to go to church providing you can take me to a place where the minister will tempt me to do the impossible."—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul's Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

WE ARE responsible for one another, and occasionally a sudden crisis proves that all men know that to be a fact and act upon it instinctively. Such an incident occurred on May 24, 1950 in Brooklyn, when a mother and her child visited a ship on which an acquaintance was employed. In boarding it, four year old Diana Svet fell into the narrow water between the side of the ship and the pier to which it was tied. Her mother screamed when she saw Diana strike the water 18 feet down. The scream attracted the attention of 150 longshoremen who were unloading the ship. Instantly they realized that the child would either drown or be crushed if the ship drifted against the pier. Without command they lined up alongside the ship, throwing their weight against the hull, straining with all their might to keep the pier and the ship apart.

● *'Just Doing What I Had to Do'*

Then three men formed a human chain to rescue the child. Joseph Zappulla said he should go first, for he was the youngest. John Balzano seized Joe's ankles, then Guiseppe Sabino took a firm grip on John's ankles and lowered his two friends until Joe called: "I've got her. Pull me up." Four lives were now at stake, and every longshoreman pushed harder than ever. Guiseppe lifted with all the power in his hardened muscles. Inch by inch he raised the three to the top of the pier. Only when Diana, dripping from her plunge, started to cry did the line of men step back from the ship and gather around the child and her rescuers. One of them remembered some milk in his lunch pail and gave it to the child, who soon recovered. Her mother tearfully thanked the men over and over.

When a newspaper called Joe at home later, he was in bed with minor bruises but said: "The main thing is that the child is all right. I was just doing what I had to do. Why, it was all part of my day's work." Perhaps the Amsterdam World Assembly of Churches spoke better than it knew when it said: "We are responsible for one another." In acting together on that faith, we, like Joe and the other men, are just doing what we have to do.—*Harold E. Fey, Managing Editor, The Christian Century.*

● *The Right Time*

A TELEPHONE operator at the central office in a small New England town received a call one day, and a man's voice in a very polite tone asked her for the correct time. She gave him the information, and went on about her other duties.

A day or two later she was called again and asked for the same information, and again she gave it. Then she noticed that the calls continued. Every few days at a few minutes before twelve o'clock the man would call, ask for the exact time, and thank her courteously for her helpfulness.

The matter had gone on in this manner for some weeks, when, one day, the girl broke through her professional reserve and said: "I've noticed your call coming almost every day for some time. Who are you? Why don't you get the time from the noon whistle down at the factory? That's where I get the right time. I set my watch by the whistle."

"Oh!" said the voice at the other end of the line. "I am the engineer at the factory who is responsible for blowing the whistle. And I thought I could get the right time if I called you."—*Charles H. Bright, Jr., Community Church, Maple Heights, Ohio.*

● *Laughton Writes About Hearing a Play*

CHARLES Laughton has a great article in the May *Atlantic* about story telling. As anyone knows who has heard him read the story of Adam and Eve and the serpent, or the story of David and Uriah and Uriah's wife, he does not think the Bible dull reading. Nor Shakespeare either. I remember Laughton's commenting just before he read aloud the Mark Antony speech in "Julius Caesar," "That man was a fascist!" In his article he makes a point about hearing a play in a theater which should be true of all churches. The good thing about that play, he said, was that "it had the truth to *fuse* us then and there . . . fifteen hundred or so of us in a big room do the same thing together at the same moment—laugh or wonder or pity."—*Graham Hunter, Fullerton, Calif.*

● *Looking Out on Beauty*

HELEN Keller has lived a rich and abundant life in spite of the handicap of blindness. Her home in Long Island was sold a few months ago and the purchaser was amazed to find that it was a house of many windows. The living room and dining room windows looked over Long Island Sound. As the purchaser discussed buying the house, he turned to Helen Keller and asked her why, since she could not see, she had insisted on so many beautiful windows Miss Keller replied that just because she was blind was no reason why she needed to live in a room with just four walls. She wanted a room that looked out upon beauty so that even though she could not see she could stand before the window knowing that without was beauty and the far view of a horizon, and sense that view by the hunger within to know the loveliness without.—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul's Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

● *Peace Is Possible*

AFTER MY trip to Europe, I believe more firmly than ever that people, though not all of one race, live in one world. In Europe, all countries are just across the back fence from each other, and thus are subject to usual neighborly irritations, often intensified by distorted historical facts or records. However, all peoples, everywhere, are much alike—created in God's image. Their differences in attitude and temperament are the result of man-made traditions, cultures and inhibitions. This was admitted everywhere I have been; and all agree that man-made adjustments can be arranged to compensate for these differences, and thus insure peace.—*Otis A. Rosboro, Vice-President Vapor Heating Corporation, Chicago.*

● *Church Must Show Way to Peace*

I THINK we can find something of the root of present-day tension and emotional distress in the way moderns have corrupted the great message of peace. To many the 23rd Psalm reads:

Science is my shepherd; I shall not want.
It alloweth me to lie down on Sleeping Beauty mattresses;
It leadeth me beside the ever flowing waters and services of the Utility Company.
It restoreth my vigor with vitamins;
It leadeth me in the paths of expedient righteousness for psychiatry's name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
I will fear no evil; for penicillin, sulfa and medical skill are with me.
The psychiatrists and psychologists, they comfort me.

Science prepareth a table before me from the frozen food locker in the presence of unexpected guests;
It covereth my head with solar housing.
My cup of leisure time runneth over because of technology and faster transportation.
Surely the good life and mercy killing shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I will dwell in a Sleep of Peace waterproof burial vault for ever and ever.

I parody this great Psalm of inner and inexhaustible soul power, not to be flippant and sensational, but to illustrate the mistaken hungering and thirsting modern man has followed.

The scientists now themselves cry out to the churchmen to train men to use their inventions for good. Science has filled men with terror. The church must show the way to peace.—*Edwin S. Hunt, Methodist Church, Oregon, Ill.*

● *A Lesson from William Penn*

"IT IS useless to grieve for what might have been had our ancestors been wiser and fairer in their treatment of the Indian. One cannot but remember, however, that William Penn's famous treaty of brotherhood and justice kept his Quakers safe and at peace for seventy years while savage border warfare raged on all sides of them. Had our other colonial leaders been equally wise, humane and fair-minded, perhaps they could have worked out a plan by which the original Americans might have remained among the newcomers as helpful neighbors, with much to contribute as well as to gain. Had ultimate separation become necessary, it could then have been achieved by mutual agreement on friendly terms, and with a minimum of the tragedy and heartbreak with which it was finally enforced."—Robert B. Eleazer in REASON, RELIGION AND RACE (Abingdon Cokesbury Press)

● *Aaron Levi Had A Dream*

I THRILLED with pride to be an American when I was in New York last November and read in the *New York Times* one morning an account of a celebration in Aaronsburg, Pa., where more than 20,000 Americans of all races and faiths gathered to commemorate a tradition of brotherhood and religious freedom that is deeply rooted in the colonial history of that little village. During the last 150 years the great waves of settlement and migration have passed this community by, and today it has a population of only 400. But 150 years ago—listen to this!—the Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church opened the doors of its first house of worship on property given to it by Aaron Levi, the immigrant Dutch Jew who founded the village. Aaron Levi was a citizen of the world, a man of tolerance and vision. He had a dream of men of all faiths and races dwelling together in friendship in this new country of his. His gift testified to that faith. To him all men, irrespective of their race or creed, were brothers.

On the occasion of this 1949 celebration in Aaronsburg, Pa., the speakers who did honor to the memory of Aaron Levi included a native American governor, a justice of the United States Supreme Court who was a foreign-born Jew, a Protestant minister, a Negro official of the United Nations, and a United Nations delegate from Pakistan. Aaronsburg, Pa., today is a monument to successful living in brotherhood and religious freedom. We need more Aaronsburgs, in America and all over the world.—*Bradshaw Mintener, Vice-President and General Counsel, Pillsbury Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.*

● *One New Language Every Five Weeks*

SOME part of the Bible—as of the end of December 1949—has been published in 1,118 languages and dialects, according to a report just issued by Margaret Hills, librarian of the American Bible Society. But there are at least 1,000 more languages which as yet have nothing of the Word of God. The untiring efforts of missionary-translators make it possible for the Scriptures to appear in one of these new languages about every five weeks.—*American Bible Society*

● *Fight One More Round*

THERE is plenty of evidence that the champions of good in the world are those who continue to fight one more round. When youths just out of school become discouraged because they can't immediately find a job, I often tell them the story of a young Christian who a number of years ago saw a want-ad in a small town Massachusetts newspaper. The ad read: "Wanted—Young man to assist office manager of brokerage house in Boston. Apply P.O. Box 1720." This young man wrote the very best letter of application that he could, then waited for a reply. He received none. Was he discouraged? Well, if he was, he didn't let it get him down, for he wrote a second letter of application. He worked on the wording, changed constructions, and greatly improved the letter. Still, he received no reply.

This lad realized that there are three requisites to success. The first is Persistence, the second is Persistence, the third is Persistence! Refusing to give up before the battle was even half over, he wrote a third letter. Then when he received no reply, he took the train to Boston. He went directly to the post office and inquired of a clerk, "Who rents Box 1720?" Gruffly he was told that such information could not be given out and the clerk made it clear he didn't want to be bothered. Then the lad sought out the postmaster, who in a kindly sympathetic way said, "My lad, it is against the law to give out such information. I really would like to help you but I just can't."

The last round was left to be fought. The lad fought it. Locating Box 1720, he watched it for hours until someone came, opened it, took out the mail; then the lad followed that person to one of Boston's large brokerage houses. On the basis of the three letters he had written, he obtained an appointment with the manager. When the manager heard the story, he said, "My young friend, you're just the type we're looking for. The job is yours."

Thus began the career of Roger Babson. Today he is one of America's great Christians, a most successful businessman.

We don't dare give up too soon. Life is a battle that has to be fought round by round.—*W. Hamilton Aulenbach, Christ Church and St. Michael's, Philadelphia, Pa.*

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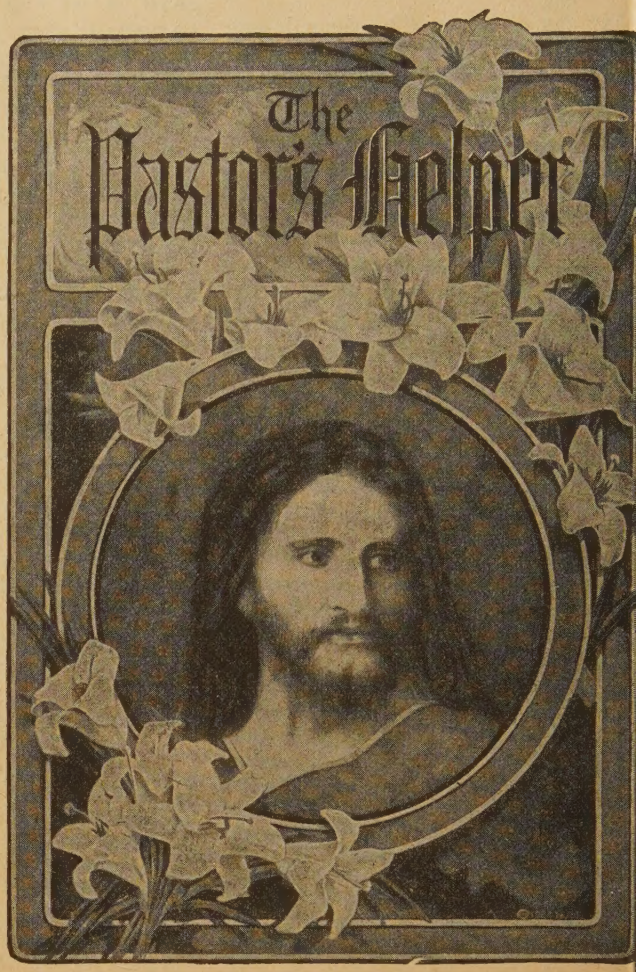

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